1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

796 533 singing was enhanced by the fervor and the earnest simplicity with which it was presented. Shining countenances raised heavenward, voices lifted exultantly, and feet beating rhythmically in accompaniment, the congregation entered wholeheartedly into the singing and seemed oblivious of everything else.

538 The next day on the boat returning to the mainland, Smith, young and well educated, tried to remember some of the tales told him when he was a boy. They were mostly the better known ones, except the Fox and the Rabbit, which concerned the Fox thriftily planting sweet potatoes and the Rabbit digging them up.

763 825 789 Prevalent beliefs covered wider ground. If an owl hoots on top of the house or near the house, it is supposed to be a sign of death.[44] A counteractive is to throw salt on the fire, burn an old shoe, or turn pockets wrong side out. If a rooster comes upon the porch and starts crowing, it is a sign of death in the house.[12b] It is also considered bad luck

484 777 784 759 to start on a journey and have to turn back. The method employed to ward off disaster is to draw a cross where you turned back and spit on it. We were told that most of the island Negroes believed in root doctors, but that they imported them from the mainland. There were none on the island.

795 Smith admitted that he knew very little about the Negroes' belief in spirits. He did know that if a person had something that the spirit wanted very badly that person would be haunted by the spirit.

231 825 A frizzled chicken is known as a wise chicken and is used to find lost articles. If something has been buried and its place forgotten, a frizzled chicken can, according to the islanders, find the place and scratch up the lost article.[12a]

•821 796 Smith remembered hearing the older Negroes tell of having watches on certain definite occasions when they sat up all night waiting for sunrise. When the sun at last appeared

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over the horizon, they would start a sun-dance and bow to the sun.

Death watches he knew nothing about, except present-day customs. However, he did say that the snake known as the coach-whip was sometimes wrapped around the neck of a person supposedly dead and its tail put in the person's mouth to see if he were still breathing.

We questioned young Smith about the festivals that the other Negroes had described and he told us that during the harvesting season various celebrations are still held.[28]

The boat neared the mainland. Our trip was over. As we bade goodbye to our guide, we cast a look of farewell at the dim outline of the tropical island. On the journey homeward impressions received during our stay on Sapelo crowded against one another in disturbing sequence. Innumerable memories assailed us. Faintly the echo of shouting rose and fell in the distance. The measured chanting of voices and the pounding of feet seemed to follow us across the water.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

53

WHEN I RISE CRYIN' HOLY

Oh my Lord, this is a needed time
Oh my Lord, this is a needed time
Oh my Lord, this is a needed time
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

I'm so glad I got my religion in time
I'm so glad I got my religion in time
I'm so glad I got my religion in time
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

O Jesus, you promise to answer prayer
O Jesus, you promise to answer prayer
O Jesus, you promise to answer prayer
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

Ah'm so glad I got my ticket in my hand
Ah'm so glad I got my ticket in my hand
Ah'm so glad I got my ticket in my hand
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

O poo' sinner won't you git down ona y'r knees
O poo' sinner won't you git down ona y'r knees
O poo' sinner won't you git down ona y'r knees
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

[821] Julia Armstrong gives me this version of the same song. It was sung during thunder-storms, which were believed to express God's anger:

Oh sister, yo'r robe don't fit you like mine
Oh sister, yo'r robe don't fit you like mine
Oh sister, yo'r robe don't fit you like mine
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

Oh Gabriel, blow yo'r trumpet loud
Oh Gabriel, blow yo'r trumpet loud
Oh Gabriel, blow yo'r trumpet loud
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

Oh Jesus, don't come that angry way
Oh Jesus, don't come that angry way
Oh Jesus, don't come that angry way
In that mornin' when I rise cryin' Holy.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

HARD TIME IN OLE VIRGINNY

243 On Sapelo, in hunting up Emma Johnson's twins, I came upon such a picture as must have been common in plantation days. Under the immense live oaks, two boys were beating rice in a home-made mortar. Chickens were all about, picking up stray grains. A couple of fanners were on the ground ready to fan the rice as soon as the hulls were loosened in the mortar. Fanning, as can be imagined, is done by jumping the rice in the flat basket and letting the wind do the rest; [19] but I noticed that Emma was thrifty, and the rice hulls—which looked like bran—fell on oilcloth laid on the ground. She told me they were to be fed to the pigs. The boys were 243 "shamed" and stopped singing when I came up, but there was no shyness about 533 Emma. She seized one of the pestles in the middle and sang a combination of the shanty, "Hard Time in Ole Virginny," the religious song, "Aye Lord, Buddin' of the Fig Tree," and a dance song, "My Ole Missus Promise Me."

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Summer comin' again
Hard time in ole Virginny.
Comin' in the rainbow
Hard time in ole Virginny.
Comin' in the cloud
Hard time in ole Virginny.
My ole missus promise me
Hard time in ole Virginny.
When she die she set me free
Hard time in ole Virginny.
She live so long
Hard time in ole Virginny.
Her head got bald
Hard time in ole Virginny.

[821]

[19] *If there is no wind, the one who does the fanning whistles for it.*

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

beliefs of the Southern Negroes as a whole. Indeed, they have actually ceased to take seriously many of the old-time superstitions because of the influence which Penn School has had. Undoubtedly there are still some people who patronize "root doctors" or "cunjuh men" in order to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or "voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who actually use the folk remedies for various ills, and there are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar phases. But the general status of the island culture as far as superstition is concerned is not very far below the level of the more backward white groups in this country. A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs found in the South is of European descent, and this holds true for the beliefs of the St. Helena Island Negroes.

Following are some of the traditional folk beliefs which seem to be actually practiced to some extent. Mid-wives, without the patient's knowledge, sometimes put a hoe or plow point or an ax under the bed to cut the after-pains attending child-birth. It is also thought that if the patient will drink tea made from gizzard which has been dried and powdered, or tea made from the nest of the mud dauber, the after-pains will be reduced. Most families try to pay the midwife promptly for her services, for it is believed that failure to pay may cause her eyes, or even her mind, to be affected. Sometimes a Bible or a broom may be seen lying on the pillow above the head of a sick person. This is supposed to prevent the spirits from taking the person away. Mrs. King, the community nurse, stated that she has occasionally had to combat the use of such remedies as cow excreta and vinegar heated for boils,